



WEST AURORA
SCHOOL DISTRICT
129



MIDDLE SCHOOL *student*
HANDBOOK
2020-2021

Middle Schools of District 129

Herget Middle School

1550 Deerpath Road
Aurora, IL 60506

Main: (630) 301-5006
Attendance: (630) 301-5230
Student Services: (630) 301-5235
Health Office: (630) 301-5240
FAX: (630) 907-3146

Jefferson Middle School

1151 Plum Street
Aurora, IL 60506

Main: (630) 301-5009
Attendance: (630) 301-5300
Student Services: (630) 301-5311
Health Office: (630) 301-5312
FAX: (630) 301-5711

Jewel Middle School

1501 Waterford Road
North Aurora, IL 60542

Main: (630) 301-5010
Attendance: (630) 301-5345
Student Services: (630) 301-5327
Health Office: (630) 301-5328
FAX: (630) 907-3161

Washington Middle School

231 Constitution Drive
Aurora, IL 60506

Main: (630) 301-5017
Attendance: (630) 301-5500
Student Services: (630) 301-5479
Health Office: (630) 301-5483
FAX: (630) 844-5712

West Aurora Virtual Learning Academy

absence@sd129.org

To report a student's absence, parents/guardians must call the school's attendance line number prior to 9:00 a.m. on the day of the absence.

Welcome to the 2020 - 2021 School Year

The COVID-19 pandemic wrought a drastic and unexpected upheaval on schools across the globe. West Aurora School District 129 is thankful for our educators, families, and students who, by way of their creativity, adaptability, and dedication, rose to the challenge. We now have an opportunity to emerge stronger and make lasting changes in the ways we support, teach, connect with, and value the more than 12,000 students in our care.

As the 2020 - 2021 return to in-person instruction gets underway, many school procedures will look different and become our new normal, while others will continue to be fluid until the pandemic settles. The purpose of this handbook is to familiarize students and families with the most current procedures and expectations needed to keep our buildings operating in a safe and orderly manner. Any updates or changes to these procedures will be communicated in multiple media formats, including an update to this document. Access to the student handbook can be found on the district and individual school websites. If you would like a printed copy, please contact your child's school office and they can assist you.

Our entire staff would like to welcome our new and returning students to a new and exciting school year in School District 129, where we embrace the curiosity, complexity, and joy of learning!

COVID-19 Related Practices and Procedures

Cleaning and Disinfection Practices

In accordance with recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH), and the Kane County Health Department (KCHD), West Aurora School District 129 has developed the following sanitation practices to prevent the spread of infection. Related videos and infographics can be viewed on our website at sd129.org/blended-experience/covid-19-sanitation-reporting.

- Exclusive use of disinfectants approved by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
- Daily electrostatic cleaning and disinfection of frequently touched surfaces (e.g., door handles/knobs, desktops/tabletops, countertops, light switches, pencil sharpeners, drinking fountains)
- Daily electrostatic cleaning and disinfection of restrooms
- Availability of hand sanitizer dispensers throughout the buildings for student and staff use
- Availability of sanitizer wipes for student and staff use
- Daily electrostatic cleaning of buses, vans, and playground equipment

Health and Safety Practices

- **Hand Hygiene** - In an effort to promote health and to prevent the spread of an illness, School District 129 recommends that students and staff members wash their hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds. In cases where this is not feasible or readily accessible, the use of hand sanitizer will be available for use. Hand hygiene is expected in these situations:
 - upon arrival to and departure from school
 - after blowing one's nose, coughing, or sneezing

- following restroom use
 - before and after eating
 - upon return from the playground/physical education
 - immediately after removing and replacing a face covering
- **Face Coverings** - All individuals in school buildings, including visitors, staff, and students from preschool through grade 12, must wear face coverings at all times unless younger than 2 years of age. Any visitor refusing to wear a face covering will be denied entry. Student non-compliance to wearing the appropriate face covering may result in standard disciplinary actions up to and including removal from in-person instruction. *Additionally:*
 - Face coverings must be worn at all times in school buildings even when social distancing is maintained.
 - Face coverings will not need to be worn outside if social distance is maintained (6+ feet from others).
 - While wearing face coverings, student and staff members should ensure that it fully covers the mouth and nose, and that the covering fits snugly against the sides of the face with no gaps.
 - Reusable face coverings can be brought from home; however, they should be machine washed or washed by hand and allowed to dry completely between uses.
 - Face coverings must meet the same standards of appropriateness as defined in the student dress code policy
 - Schools will provide disposable face coverings in the event that a staff member, student, or visitor does not have one for use.
 - Students and staff members should be aware that the front of the face covering is considered contaminated and should not be touched during removal or replacement.
- **Social Distancing** - District 129 has developed procedures to ensure 6-foot physical distance from other persons as much as possible. The expectations pertain to visitors, students, and staff members in all areas and settings to the greatest extent possible. This includes:
 - Limiting the number of individuals in one space to 10 or fewer in fewer during Phase 3 or 50 or fewer during Phase 4.
 - Heeding posted visual reminders throughout school buildings including tape or other indicators of safe distances in areas where students congregate or line up (e.g., arrival and departure, lunchroom lines, hallways, recess lines, libraries, cafeterias).
 - Abstaining from physical contact, including, but not limited to, handshakes, high fives, hugs, etc.
 - Scheduling restroom breaks or escorting individual classrooms to the restroom area to monitor social distancing, as appropriate
 - Creating distance between children on school buses, as much as possible. Presently, during Phase 4 there may be no more than 50 individuals on the school bus at one time.

Symptom Screenings

In order to proactively prevent the spread of COVID-19 or any other infectious disease, West Aurora School District 129 is requiring that all staff, students, and visitors self-certify that they

are free of symptoms of COVID-19 each day before entering any school facility. Current known symptoms of COVID-19 include:

- fever greater than 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit (District 129's fever threshold is 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit)
- cough
- shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- chills
- fatigue
- muscle and body aches
- headache
- sore throat
- new loss of taste or smell
- congestion or runny nose
- nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea

Individuals who show any signs or symptoms of the illness, that are uncommon to them, should stay home for 14 calendar days, consider being diagnostically tested, and consult a medical provider for evaluation and treatment instructions.

Response to Positive COVID-19 Cases and COVID-19 Related Symptoms

- Any individual within the school environment who shows COVID-19 related symptoms will be immediately separated from the rest of the school population and will be sent home. We ask that students are picked up by a guardian or an approved emergency contact within one hour of notification from the school.
- Symptomatic individuals will be required to quarantine at home for 14 calendar days from the date of the onset of symptoms.
The areas of the school used by a sick person will be promptly cleaned and sanitized.
- Any report of a positive COVID-19 diagnosis will result in notification to staff and families of the school. This notification will maintain the confidentiality of the person who is sick.
- The individual who has a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19 will be required to quarantine at home for 10 days from the date of the positive test and until 24 hours fever free without fever-reducing medication
- Those individuals who were in close contact* of someone with a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19 will be individually notified by the building's administration or school's health office and will be required to quarantine at home for 14 calendar days from the date of close contact.
- Individuals who **did not** have close contact* with the person who tested positive with COVID-19 will not receive any further communication and regular attendance to school should continue.
- Students or staff returning from illness related to COVID-19 should call to check in with the school nurse or building administrator following quarantine.
- Guardians can expect that a building administrator or member of the building's health staff to contact them to ask specific symptom reporting questions. In an effort to collaborate with the Kane County Health Department in contact tracing efforts. All individuals who test positive for COVID-19 and who have COVID-19 like symptoms will be reported to the health department. Close contacts* will also be identified and their information will be provided to the health department. Health department personnel will connect with the family via telephone to complete the contact tracing process.

Related videos and infographics can be viewed on our website at sd129.org/blended-experience/covid-19-sanitation-reporting.

**A close contact is defined as being closer than 6 feet of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 or has COVID-19 like symptoms for 15 or more minutes during the school day.*

Remote Learning Information - Helpful Supports

- The best option for connecting your student's school-issued device at home will always be via a WiFi internet connection. If you don't have a WiFi connection at home, consider:
 - Connecting via your cell phone's hotspot. Step-by-step directions can be accessed at pcmag.com/how-to/how-to-turn-your-phone-into-a-wi-fi-hotspot.
 - Talking to your neighbors about the possibility of sharing internet connections
 - Checking out the Aurora Public Library's limited number of WiFi hotspots, which are available for a week at a time. Find out more by visiting their website at aurorapubliclibrary.org/public-computers--services-4309.
 - Accessing low cost broadband WiFi access through Comcast's Internet Essentials Program. Apply using their website at internetessentials.com, or call 1-855-8-INTERNET (1-855-846-8376).
- Teachers will be communicating assignments with students via specific platforms intended for student engagement. Seesaw is used for elementary students while Schoology is used for secondary students. To find out more about these platforms and other parent portals, please visit our website at sd129.org/parents/parent-portals
- We know that families may occasionally need support with our instructional tech platforms and devices. We have created several videos and documents to assist you and your student to minimize any disruption to instruction. Many resources are available in English and Spanish on our website at sd129.org/parents/my-student/student-technology
- Students and parents can get personalized technical assistance through calling (630) 301-5038 or by emailing helpdesk@sd129.org between the hours of 8 am and 4 pm, Monday-Friday.
 - **To clarify, this service provides tech support only and operators will not be equipped to answer other questions nor give homework assistance.*
- During the time away from school, students can also text 331-684-7640 to report a need for support for the following:
 - Missing the support they typically receive from a school social worker, counselor, nurse, or other emotional support person
 - In need of shelter or food
 - Worried about themselves or a friend

Attendance Information

Absence Reporting Procedures

Consistent student attendance is important for the academic and social emotional growth of every student. We understand there are times when a student might miss school due to an appointment, family emergency, or student illness. If a student is unable to attend school on a given day, we ask that parents/guardians please contact the school attendance line before 7:30 a.m. to report the absence. In an effort to maintain a healthy and safe school environment, we also ask that the reason for each absence be provided to the attendance line. Having specific information about illness symptoms will assist the district in making important decisions and communicate accordingly as we continue to navigate the challenges associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. We also encourage parents/guardians to provide our school offices with

pertinent notes that document the reason for the absence from the appropriate agency or healthcare provider.

Attendance reporting phone numbers can be found on the first page of this document.

Picking Students Up During the School Day

If a student needs to be dismissed during the school day, a parent/guardian should notify the school office as soon as possible regarding the time and reason for early dismissal. School office staff will do their best to have students waiting in the office at the designated pick-up time. For the safety of our students, district office staff are only permitted to release students to a parent/guardian or an approved adult emergency contact. When communicating that a student will need to leave school early, please tell the school office who will be picking up. Without this information, we will be unable to release students to anyone but the legal parent/guardian. When possible, it is helpful if parents/guardians discuss this plan with their student ahead of time so they are aware of the plan.

All parents/guardians and approved adult emergency contacts requesting to remove a student from school during the school day will be asked to provide a driver's license or state issued photo ID card. Even though we may recognize our parents/guardians, we appreciate your cooperation with this process.

Withdrawing and Transferring a Student

Should a legal parent/guardian need to withdraw a student from school, the steps below will assure a smooth transaction:

- Provide the school office the request to withdraw as soon as possible prior to the student's last day of school,
- Complete necessary paperwork provided by the school office,
- Return all text books, electronic devices, and any other district assigned materials to the office, and
- Satisfy all outstanding monetary responsibilities

Once all steps have been completed, the school office will provide the parent/guardian with a transfer packet to be used for enrollment at the new school.

Homework

Homework at the middle school level becomes more formal and requires more time and effort as the student progresses and prepares for high school. Parental guidance is a crucial component to a student's success in the classroom. Parents/guardians should monitor their child's home study and homework completion on a daily basis.

Because both classwork and homework are an integral part of learning at the middle school level, it is the student's responsibility to complete their work whether they are present in school, absent, or working remotely. A failure to complete work according to the timeline established by the teacher may result in loss of credit. Students who miss school due to an excused absence, will be expected to complete their missing work within the required timeline established by the teacher. Students who miss school due to chronic truancy or an unexcused absence, will be provided the opportunity to complete missed assignments at the discretion of the teacher. Failure to complete assignments in the allotted time frame may result in loss of credit.

Students have the right to earn full credit for make-up assignments for excused absences provided they:

1. Request homework on or before the day he/she returns to school

2. Establish a timeline with the teacher for the completion of work
3. Successfully complete the work within these guidelines
4. Obtain, from fellow classmates, class notes missed

The student should expect the teacher to do the following:

1. Require completion of tests and quizzes assigned prior to the absence
2. Collect any work assigned prior to the absence or assignments sent home during the absence
3. Provide instructions for assignments
4. Give a reasonable amount of time to complete make-up work
5. Communicate make-up policies early in the semester

The student should not expect the teacher to do the following:

1. Duplicate classroom activities
2. Provide tutoring
3. Provide all work to a student prior to an extended absence

Occasionally, students are absent for an extended period of time. Should an extended absence be 10 days or longer, a parent/guardian should contact the building administrator and request a conference to address make-up work.

Any parent/guardian questions regarding a student's homework should be directed to the classroom teacher via Schoology, email, or phone call. Parents may access Schoology by logging onto the district's website at, app.schoology.com.

Academic Dishonesty

Middle school students are expected to maintain an atmosphere that actively fosters academic honesty. This should be a cooperative effort between parents, students and staff. Students may face both academic and disciplinary consequences for academic dishonesty.

Examples of academic dishonesty are:

- Plagiarism - Submitting another person's writing as one's own.
- Giving or receiving test questions or answers to another student
- Copying from another student or knowingly permitting another student to copy your work
- Any other action intended to obtain credit for work not one's own.

Assessments

District 129 uses general achievement and ability assessments in sixth through eighth grade.

The purpose of these assessments includes:

- Assisting parents/guardians to observe how their child is achieving in relation to themselves and other students,
- Helping teachers differentiate school instruction; and
- Forming a record of student growth.

Grading System

The grading system used on the middle school report card is designed to provide parents/guardians an evaluation of students' achievement and an assessment of their work. The letter grade (A, B, C, D, F) indicates the degree of achievement and shows the relationship of work to the work of all students in the grade.

- A - Excellent
- B - Above Average
- C - Average

- F - Failure
- INC - Incomplete or Pass

Parents/guardians may check their student's grades via Schoology. Mid-term progress reports are available midway through each quarter. These reports are generated in an effort to provide necessary motivation and assistance to the students prior to issuing permanently-recorded grades. Report cards are issued at the end of each grading period.

Incomplete grades (INC) are to be made up within two weeks after a student's absence. Failure to complete work within this time limit will result in the lowering of the grade or in some cases, failure of the course.

Honor Roll

The middle schools will recognize a quarterly honor roll and a special recognition will be given at the end of the school year. The following Honor Roll standards will be observed each quarter:

- **High Honor Roll** A student must have A's in all subject areas to qualify
- **Honor Roll** A student must not have any grade below a B in all subject areas

Other Important Information

Reporting a Student Injury or Accident

If a student is injured at school or while traveling to or from school, the injury should be reported immediately to the school administration, school health office, or teacher.

Bicycles

When a student rides a bicycle to school, he or she must park and lock the bike in the provided racks. School District 129 cannot accept responsibility for stolen or damaged bicycles.

Birthday Treats

School District 129 requests that students and parents refrain from bringing edible treats and non-edible items to school as a form of celebration. Due to the current pandemic health concerns, all elementary schools will recognize student birthdays in unique and fun ways during the school day.

We appreciate the cooperation of our parents/guardians by helping us maintain healthy school environments.

Cafeteria

All food and drink is to be consumed in the areas designated for food consumption. Students should practice good hand hygiene to promote health and prevent the spread of an illness. District 129 recommends that students and staff members wash their hands with soap and water for 20 seconds, before and after eating. All schools are also equipped with approved hand sanitizer that is available for use during school hours.

During Phase 4, no more than 50 individuals will be allowed in one space at a time; therefore, breakfast and lunch services will expand beyond cafeterias in order to accommodate larger numbers of students. Individual buildings may use classrooms and other spaces as part of their routine food service. It is important to note that an area where students consume meals will be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected between groups.

Free breakfast, lunch, and milk are available to all students in District 129 for the 2020 - 2021 school year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Families do not need to submit the typical free/reduced lunch application. *See also Food Allergies.*

Outside food delivery to the school will not be permitted.

Cell Phones/Electronic Devices

Due to the possibility of vandalism, theft or loss, students are encouraged not to bring electronic devices to school. The District assumes no responsibility for lost or stolen items.

Cellular phones, if brought to school, must be silenced during the academic day (8:45 AM to 3:38 PM). Students are permitted to use their phones in areas designated by the school's administration after school hours and during school events. Please contact your student's school if there is an emergent need to speak to your student during the day. Any cell phone or other electronic device that disrupts the educational environment will be confiscated and/or appropriate disciplinary actions will be rendered to the student.

Closed Campus Procedures

Students may not leave the school building during the school day without being signed out by a parent/guardian who shows photo ID, or without the permission or knowledge of school personnel.

Crisis Response

District 129 works with a broad-based team representing law enforcement, emergency services, community agencies, and others to continually improve responding to emergency situations. In the event of an emergency, communication will be broadcast to parents/guardians via automated phone, email, text messaging, and social media. Please follow the instructions communicated in those communications to help our school staff mitigate the emergency.

School safety drills will be scheduled at times established by the school's administration. A minimum of the following will occur each school year:

- 3 evacuation drills
- 2 severe weather drills
- 1 law enforcement drill
- 1 bus evacuation drill

It is the belief of the district's school safety team that regular opportunities to practice safety measures are in the best interest of students, staff, and the school community. This being said, all school safety drills will be announced to students before the exercise and at no time will any look-alike weapons or scary tactics be used.

Concussions

Students who exhibit signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion or head injury during school hours will be removed from participation or competition at that time. For the safety of the injured student, they will not be permitted to return to play unless cleared to do so by a licensed physician or a certified athletic trainer. Students who have experienced concussions will be supported by the District in accordance with the school's Return-to-Play and Return-to-Learn protocols. Parents/guardians should notify the building administration and health office if they are aware their student has suffered a concussion either during or after school hours. *See Board Policy, 7.305 Student Athlete Concussions and Head Injuries.*

Emergency School Closing Information

In the event District 129 finds it necessary to close or implement an early or late dismissal at one or more of its school buildings due to inclement weather, a health emergency, or other unforeseen circumstance, parents/guardians will be notified via either automated phone, email, text messaging, and/or social media.

Field Trip Chaperones

Parents who chaperone school field trips, must undergo an annual screening process. The school's administration will provide parent chaperones with the guidance necessary in order to complete the screening process. Parents who chaperone school field trips are reminded that in the role of chaperone they are representatives of District 129, and their conduct should reflect as such.

Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, state guidance discourages field trips in an effort to minimize the spread of the virus. Chaperone and classroom volunteer opportunities will be considerably less or prohibited this school year.

Food Allergies

District 129 is a participant of the National School Lunch/School Breakfast program. As outlined in the USDA's Food and Nutrition Services Instruction 783-2 Revision 2, a medical statement from the physician detailing food allergies must be provided before the school can restrict or substitute foods for the students. *See also Cafeteria.*

Physical Education Excusal Requests

In the case of a student returning to school after an illness, a request to be excused from P.E. class will be granted for 2-days with a written request from the parent/guardian. For longer periods of time, a doctor's note is required and should state the length of non-participation.

Contacting a Student During the School Day

District 129 respectfully requests that parents/guardians refrain from contacting their child during school hours. We do, however, understand that emergent situations arise. Should a parent/guardian need to speak with their child during the school day, please contact the school's main office and we will do our best to accommodate the request as quickly as possible.

Contacting a Teacher

We want to hear from our parents/guardians and encourage home and school communication. Education is much more impactful when schools and families partner together in the best interest of the child. To contact a teacher, please use the teacher's voice mail or email, which is accessible through the District's website, www.sd129.org. See Saw (elementary school) and Schoology (middle school and high school) are online learning platforms accessible to both students and parents. Teachers may also be contacted through this resource as well. For assistance accessing See Saw or Schoology, please contact 630-301-

Visitors and Volunteers

Student and staff safety is a top priority in District 129. In order to maintain safe school environments, all visitors must buzz the office at the school's main entrance. When prompted, visitors will be asked to state their name and the reason for their visit. Once entrance to the building has been permitted, visitors should immediately check in at the school's office. All visitors will be asked to present a valid and legal photo identification card prior to being issued a visitor's badge. All identification cards will be scanned through District 129's visitor management system, which is linked to the National Sex Offender Registry. Once the scan is complete, approved visitors will be provided a visitor's badge to be displayed at all throughout the visit.

The badge should then be turned in with the visitor checks out of the building at the end of their stay.

Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, state guidance requires schools to reduce visitors to the school in an effort to minimize the spread of the virus. Classroom volunteer opportunities will be considerably less or prohibited this school year.

Parent/Guardian Contact Information

Parent/guardian partnerships are extremely important to District 129. In order for our staff to provide families with the most updated student and school information and to reach parents/guardians should an emergency arise, please update all contact information when a change occurs. Our messaging platforms utilize landline and cellular telephone numbers and Email addresses. To make these changes, please contact your student's school or our registration office at 630-301-5050.

Only those individuals listed as parents/guardians may pick a student up from school without prior notification. Should an emergency contact need to remove a student from school, the parent/guardian must first notify the main office. It is also important to update emergency contacts as they may also change throughout the school year.

In the event a child is not picked up from school, and a parent/guardian or emergency contact is unreachable, the school staff will contact local law enforcement to assist with parent/guardian reunification.